

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY CHATTANOOGA OFFICE SPACE ALTERNATIVES: MODIFICATIONS TO ALTERNATIVE 3

In April 2007, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) issued a final environmental assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) on alternatives for providing future office space for TVA staff in Chattanooga. The EA evaluated four alternatives; since then, TVA has narrowed the range of alternatives to Alternative 1, continuing to lease the existing Chattanooga Office Complex, and Alternative 3, constructing new office space on TVA property at the Chickamauga Dam Reservation. Further development of Alternative 3 has led to modifications of the proposed office complex described in the original April 2007 EA. The potential impacts associated with the modifications to Alternative 3 are described in a supplemental final EA, which is incorporated by reference.

The modifications to Alternative 3 include the clearing and grading of about three acres of the area designated as a visual buffer in the original EA to allow for the construction of an emergency vehicle access road around the office building and the relocation of the water, sewer, and other utility connections from along the office complex access road to the southeast corner of the site closer to existing utility lines. These modifications would result in little or no change in the impacts to most environmental resources described for Alternative 3 in the original EA. Potential exceptions are visual resources and cultural resources.

The modified Alternative 3 would slightly reduce the area of visual buffer prescribed in the original EA. This change could result in a small increase in the visual prominence of the office building. This change would be offset by adherence to the mitigation measures listed below, as well as a modification to the grading plan which lowers the crest of the hill so the peak elevation of the building would be similar to the conceptual design. The overall impacts of the office complex on visual resources including the historic Chickamauga Dam would still be insignificant and there would be no adverse effects to historic properties.

The site of the relocated utility lines was surveyed for archaeological resources and none that were listed, eligible or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places were found. TVA has concluded that the relocated utility lines would not affect cultural resources. The Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer has concurred with this determination.

Mitigation

TVA would implement the following mitigation measures for Alternative 3:

- **Visual/Conservation Buffer** - Maintain existing vegetation on the steep slopes on the north side of the tract from the shoreline to the prominent peaks of the tract as shown in Figure 1 of this supplemental EA.
- **Vegetation Removal From Original Visual Buffer** - All trees of 24-inch diameter at breast height removed from the visual buffer area specified in the original EA would be replaced at a 2 to 1 ratio, with a mixture of both hardwood and evergreen species. The replacement

trees would be planted within the portion of the original buffer area that would be graded but outside of the emergency vehicle access area or in other sparsely forested parts of the original buffer area. All trees would be a minimum of 6 feet in height at the time of planting and would be maintained for a minimum of two growing seasons until the root balls have been established. All tree species would be native to the area and approved by a TVA landscape architect prior to planting.

- **Lighting** - During construction, all lights used (pole-mounted, equipment-mounted, or structure-mounted floodlights) would be fully shielded or would have internal low-glare optics, such that light would not be emitted from the fixture at angles above the horizontal plane. For construction, this could require temporarily retrofitting floodlights and other fixtures with external visors and side shields. Shielded low pressure sodium lighting would be used during the construction and operational phases. Area lighting and parking lot light poles would be no taller than 40 feet, unless they were lighting objects taller than 40 feet. In such cases, pole heights would be minimized.
- **Structures** - All color schemes for building exteriors would be visually compatible with natural background colors and provide dark roofs on all structures.

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the findings listed above and the analyses in the original and supplemental EAs, we conclude that the modifications to Alternative 3 would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the environment. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This FONSI is contingent upon adherence to routine best management practices and the above mitigation measures.



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Date Signed